

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
The Inn at Middletown Conference Room
70 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Mayor Dan Drew
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber of Commerce)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Lieutenant DeSena (Police Department)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	William Russo (Director of Public Works)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Geen Thazmapallath (Director of Parking)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Pamela Steele (Pamela Roose Specialty Yarns)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)
Mary Ann Perrotti (Commissioner)	
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	

Annual Meeting

Self Introductions and Public Comments

Diane Gervais thanked Gary Nagler and The Inn at Middletown for hosting our annual meeting.

Mayor Dan Drew

The Bob's building is well underway. The City is working with a number of potential partners. The project will be a positive for the downtown.

The city has been responding to the ongoing violence and crimes being committed at wharf side. Working closely with the building owners and management the City has agreed to add extra police presence with beat officers and officers in uniform to secure the area in and around wharf side. Some of which is being funded by the building owner. In addition to the officers, there will be investigative resources on the streets in building the case against these gangsters. The Richmond Group and the owner of the building have been receptive installing cameras, lighting etc. which has been a played a significant role in catching the crimes being committed.

The goal is to investigate, build a solid case and sentence this group of gangsters to jail.

The City is focusing on a series of long term initiatives, extra programming to our younger generation and incentives to the building owners in the north end, including a police sub-station.

The renovation of Sphere Park has begun under the direction of public works and the housing authority.

Diane Gervais mentioned pan handling is on the rise in front of the Chamber and Amato's from gravitational forces in front of Dunkin Donuts. The Mayor suggested the DBD Commissioners send a letter to the owner of Dunkin Donuts asking for solutions to the loitering problem at their establishment.

Budget for 2016 – 2017 fiscal year:

The budget for the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year was approved by the current Board of Commissioners.

Motion to accept – Marc Levin

2nd by – Jen Alexander

The mill rate will remain the same at 2.41.

Motion to accept – Jen Alexander

2nd by – Peter Harding

Chair's Remarks for Year in Review – Diane Gervais

We accomplished a lot this past year!

We spread the word that Main St Middletown is a destination to explore with our statewide marketing Campaign.

We created and executed a marketing campaign that highlighted our businesses and our beautiful Downtown. Thank you to Marc Levin for spearheading this and to Jen Alexander for creating the “What’s my Main Street” theme.

Through our gift card program we kept \$44,000 on our Main Street.

We kept our streets beautiful with seasonal plantings, and clean with weekly cleaning.

We engaged more of our neighbor businesses having them join us through marketing packages.

We continued to work with our city partners on issues and programs in our downtown.

We distributed 1,600 holiday gift bags filled with promotional pieces from our downtown merchants during Holiday on Main.

We brightened our city for the holidays with new holiday decorations! With our leadership we partnered with the City and the Chamber to purchase 26 5’ lighted snowflakes, hanging them along our entire Main Street. Many thanks to the City and to the Chamber for working with us on this.

We did all of this with board volunteers and minimal staff....many thanks to all of you and especially to Lisa Melaven who keeps things running in our office!

Now on to more!

Election of Board Members

The re-election of the Downtown Business District Board Officers is as follows:

Chair - Diane Gervais (Amato’s Toy and Hobby)

Vice Chair - Gary Nagler (The Inn at Middletown)

Secretary – Marc Levin (Malloves Jewelers)

Treasurer – Mike DiPiro (Guilmartin, DiPiro, Sokolowski LLC)

Motion to accept – All in Favor

Marc Levin mentioned next year's annual meeting will be an election year for commissioners. The current commissioners need to start thinking of what positions they might like to hold. Jen Alexander thought it would be a good idea for the commissioners to bring a friend/business owner to the DBD monthly meetings to seek potential interest to the DBD.

Regular Meeting

Monthly Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2nd by Tom Ford
- Minutes accepted

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

The DBD is in good financial standings, with approximately \$99,000.00 in the bank. The City of Middletown has mailed the second installment of \$70,282.78 to the DBD; which will be deposited into our money market. Our third and final installment for 2015-2016 will be requested in late June. The delinquencies for this fiscal year are at a minimum. Our marketing partnerships have increased, bringing in more revenue.

- Motion made by Jen Alexander to approve
- 2nd by Marc Levin
- Treasurer's Report accepted.

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

Beautification: Our planters have been emptied and will be filled weather permitting with spring flowers soon. We have agreed to loan one of our planters to Trevor Davis and The Holy Trinity Church during the construction of the Hajjar project as it could be damaged and they need something to block vehicular access to a walkway between their buildings. It will be on loan until the Hajjar project is at a point where it can be returned to its spot safely. We will fill it with flowers, Trevor will see to it that it is watered and kept clean. We plan to meet with Buds and Blossoms this spring to discuss next year's plantings, and have received a quote from Scovill Garden Center for doing our winter planting. I am thinking of having them do our winter planting and leaving the other three plantings with Bobbi.

Kiosks - Lisa has been in contact with Ken Arnell of the connection and we are awaiting word on whether or not they can do the job of refurbishing the kiosks this spring.

Gift Cards: Continuing to run smoothly! We just this week had a nice sale of 80 \$25 gift cards to the Board of ED...this is a new customer for us, they are using them in much the same manner as City Hall as an incentive for a program. We need to continue to spread the word that this is a great idea for businesses, as well as agencies, I am making a point to mention it at each CBB meeting, and it would be helpful if all of you could spread the word as well. Each of these gift card sales is an opportunity for a new customer to come to Main Street and see what we have to offer.

Eversource claim: no word from our insurance company. However I did reach out to Pat Bandesz, the community outreach person for Eversource who attends Chamber meetings etc. I filled her in on the issue,

gave her copies of the documentation and asked her to look into it. She got back to me last week with the following....David Quick the person pursuing us, was out on leave, that his replacement told her that they had settled with the insurance company for a lower amount (don't know what) and told her to tell us that we are not allowed to have a sidewalk sweeper clean our sidewalks as there vault covers are not required to be designed for that. I have since passed this info on to Public Works and to the Mayor's office as I find it interesting pickup trucks and other service vehicles are on the sidewalks often, and I am unsure why Eversource has the power to say this.

Grand Openings: I attended the grand opening of Cinder and Salt...a very nice addition to Main Street, if you have not been in, you should check it out.

Marketing: Our commercials are airing; I am hearing a lot of people saying that they saw them... We need to have a meeting in early April to discuss more commercials etc, I will email some date options.

Lisa and I have begun work on our Spring/Summer Brochure, we are low on our winter ones, and have many requests for Spring/summer weddings, so we will be trying to get this done asap.

Property list: There were quite a few changes and discrepancies in our taxpayer list, we have adjusted our records and have worked with both tax offices to make corrections. I think that we need to do a complete audit of these properties on a map, to confirm that we are including all. The list that the Tax Collector provided was of great help, though even that had some incorrect and dated information.

Tax abatements are another issue to review; I have a call and an email into Michiel's office for some clarification on this issue.

Office Lease: I have been in contact with our Landlord, Marie, and she is happy to have us renew our lease for another year with no changes to our very generous rent.

Thank you to Marie for taking such good care of us. I will sign the lease as soon as Marie has a chance to get it to us.

Maintenance – Tom Ford

Tom reports the spring clean up and sweeping has started.

Police Report – Lieutenant DeSena

Lieutenant DeSena reports the police department is putting younger officers on the beat.

Officer White is talking to the management of Dunkin Donuts regarding the up rise of loitering in front of the business.

Public Works – William Russo

None

Parking Report - Geen Thazhampallath

Geen reports the lower level of the Arcade parking garage has been closed for repairs. The police department has moved their parking to Dingwall Street.

Planning – Tom Marano

None

Chamber of Commerce – Cathy Duncan

Herd Restaurant has joined the Chamber and is now open for business.

In & Out Bonds has opened in Riverview Center.

The Taste of Downtown, business after work is next Tuesday. Currently there are eleven businesses participating in this event.

Panhandling is on the rise. It is important to call into the police department dispatch “every time” and report when this is happening.

Peter Harding suggested we invite the Chief of Police and Dispatch director Wayne Bartolotta to a DBD meeting to discuss the pan handling concerns.

New Business –**None**

- Motion to adjourn by Maryann Perrotti
- 2nd by Val Scribano